UNITED NATIONS

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General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/54/465
S/1999/1060
14 October 1999
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 116 (c)
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS AND REPORTS OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 12 October 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw you attention to the statement by the Presidency of the Council of the European Union on the forced removals of civilians in Burundi, issued on 8 October 1999 (see annex).

I should be obliged if you would have the text of this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 116 (c), and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Marjatta RASI
Permanent Representative of Finland
to the United Nations

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the forced removals of civilians in Burundi issued by the Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 8 October 1999

The European Union strongly deplores the renewed outbreak of violence and internal conflict over the past few weeks in Burundi, mainly in the southern part of the country and around the capital, Bujumbura.

The European Union is disturbed by the renewed rebel attacks, the first victim of which has been the civilian population.

It is also particularly concerned about the recent forced removals by the Burundi army of some 260,000 civilians in the countryside round Bujumbura.

The European Union deplores the violation of human rights, the loss of human life and the destruction of property that have been the hallmark of this operation. It regrets the anguish and suffering to which the civilian population was subjected during their forced transfer to the assembly areas.

The European Union calls upon the Government of Burundi to call a halt to the policy of forced removals and to allow the people to return to their property as quickly as possible. In the meantime, it urges that Government to provide the people with improved sanitary and temporary accommodation conditions.

It notes that the Government of Burundi has assured United Nations representatives and international non-governmental organizations free access to all of the camps concerned to enable them to provide humanitarian assistance. It asks the Burundi authorities to continue to afford the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Burundi and its observers the same access.

The European Union hopes that all Burundi rebel movements will join the Arusha peace process and that all the parties to the Burundi conflict will choose the path of negotiation rather than that of violence and conflict.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus and Malta and the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this statement.